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INFO RUCNOSC/OSCE POST COLLECTIVE  
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SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (SECSTATE PASS INSTRUCTIONS)

SENSITIVE  
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN - FORWARD MOVEMENT ON AMENDING MEDIA  
LEGISLATION

REF: ASTANA 0613 (NOTAL)

¶1. (SBU) Pol-Econ Chief met on April 24 with Anastasiya Shchegortsova, head of the Information and Culture Ministry's Strategic Planning Department, and Bogatoz Kaipova, from the Presidential Administration's Domestic Policy Department, to discuss Kazakhstan's Madrid commitment to amend the country's media legislation by the end of 2008.

¶2. (SBU) Shchegortsova and Kaipova confirmed to Pol-Econ Chief that the Information and Culture Ministry was moving forward in establishing a working group on media legislation amendments, as Minister Yertysbayev had agreed to do during a February 25 meeting with the OSCE (see reftel). They explained that the first working group meeting would be held in Astana on May 12. In addition to the Information and Culture Ministry, government participants would include the Justice Ministry, Procurator General's Office, and the Economy and Budget Planning Ministry. Shchegortsova and Kaipova said that key NGO's in the media field had agreed to participate, including Adil Soz, Internews, the Club of Editors-in-Chief, the National Association of Broadcasters, and the Congress of Journalists -- which had proposed its own package of media legislation amendments in 2007. (Note: We subsequently confirmed with Adil Soz that they had been contacted by the Information and Culture Ministry requesting the name of their working group participant, though Adil Soz had not yet received a formal invitation to the May 12 meeting. End Note.)

¶3. (SBU) Pol-Econ Chief noted that addressing the fundamental issues -- including media registration requirements as well as decriminalization of libel -- would require not only amendments to the law on mass media, but also amendments to the criminal and civil codes. Shchegortsova and Kaipova explained that the aim of the working group would be to develop a package of amendments to all media-related legislation. They also stressed that while the OSCE would not be participating directly in the working group, implementing the OSCE's recommendations would be the crux of its work. The Information and Culture Ministry had already received a number of amendment proposals from various sources, which would be discussed by the working group, they added.

¶4. (SBU) Shchegortsova and Kaipova could not provide details on a timeframe for completing a package of amendments. The working group, they contended, would develop a schedule once it met. Kaipova emphasized that while the Information and Culture Ministry has the lead on the media legislation amendments, the overall effort of implementing the Madrid

commitments is being coordinated by the Presidential  
Administration's Domestic Policy Department.  
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